



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

UZBEKISTAN

CASE STUDY

Community Sports Provide a Healthy Alternative

Newly Constructed Sports Center Benefits Over 3,000 Young People



Photo: CHF

According to one of the young men, “Being a youth leader has made it easier for me to motivate young people in the community to solve their own problems. This success helps me and other young people understand that positive changes are possible through enthusiasm and cooperation.”

Challenge: Beshkuton is one of the largest communities in Southern Uzbekistan’s Muzrabod district. For the last several years, living conditions have been worsening as the village’s economic situation becomes more desperate. The population’s only source of income is seasonal work in the fields. Unemployment is very high, especially for young people. As a result, social problems such as crime, and drug and alcohol abuse began to rise. While sports and social activities have been shown to help with these problems, no facilities were available to the public.

Initiative: To address these problems, USAID, through implementing partner Community Habitat Finance (CHF), supported an initiative of the residents of Beshkuton to turn a vacant building into an indoor sports complex and community center. With the support of local authorities, the project was completed in only three months. A group of young leaders launched a campaign to encourage membership and participation. Their enthusiasm inspired local government and private businesses to sponsor youth related activities and to provide funds for competitions and prizes.

Results: This renovated complex now serves over 3,000 people. It consists of three large halls with sports equipment, two changing rooms, and a bathroom. The youth leaders have organized sports clubs to train young people in different indoor sports such as boxing, wrestling, karate, gymnastics, weightlifting, chess, and table tennis. The District Sports Committee employs five people as sports trainers at the new complex. A per-visit membership fee of \$0.10 is used to maintain the center and organize sports events. The complex also allows nearby schools to conduct winter physical education classes, as most schools do not have indoor sports facilities.

This project exemplifies how youth can make a difference in their own communities by involving themselves in decision-making and project implementation. The self-initiative that these young people are taking to promote a healthy lifestyle through inter-community and regional competitions demonstrates their ability to contribute to a positive future for themselves and their neighbors.